DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 239 044 CE 037 863

AUTHOR Piotrowski, Chris; Keller, John W.
TITLE A Career Development Approach for Black Students.
PUB DATE [84]
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Students; Career Change; *Career Choice; *Career Development; Career Planning; Decision Making; Employment Interviews; Higher Education; *Job Satisfaction; Job Search Methods; *Life Satisfaction; *Models; Portfolios (Background Materials); Self Concept; Self Evaluation (Individuals)
IDENTIFIERS *Career and Life Planning Model; Life Planning; Resumes; University of West Florida

ABSTRACT

The Career and Life Planning (CLP) model is based on a CLP course that has been continually offered at the University of West Florida since 1971. The CLP model is an eight-step career development strategy that has been particularly effective with black students. Addressed in the individual steps of the model are the following areas: gaining self-awareness, developing a career personality profile, settling on four careers, projecting four careers into the future, developing a careers profile, preparing a resume, preparing for an employment interview, and preparing for subsequent careers. The CLP experience in obtaining vital information about one's career field and presenting oneself effectively in job interviews fosters both competence and confidence, two widely recognized ingredients of career placement success. The experiences of the many graduates of the CLP course at the University of West Florida have shown that the CLP model is a proven and effective means of career development and planning. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED239044

A Career Development Approach for Black Students

Chris Piotrowski and John W. Keller

University of West Florida

Running head: Career Development for Blacks

CE037863

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C Piotrowski

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Abstract

A model on Career Development for Black students is presented which emphasized a strategy for attainment of career choice and satisfaction. The authors propose that the Career and Life Planning (CLP) approach will serve as one model that is both practical and effective. Hopefully, the decisions resulting from CLP will contribute to self-realization, job-hunting skills, and a rewarding career. These issues are quite pertinent today for Black students seeking placement due to the competitive nature of the job market.

A Career Development Approach for Black Students

Chris Piotrowski and John W. Keller

University of West Florida

Introduction

Career development courses and programs have only recently flourished (Bachhuber, 1977; Evans & Rector, 1978; Haney & Howland, 1978; Rubinton, 1980; Ware & Matthews, 1980; Weissman & Krebs, 1976) and now over 1000 colleges and universities nationally offer courses in career development. This "career" curriculum usually purports to expand self-awareness, career knowledge, and specific prerequisites and skills required in obtaining satisfactory employment.

Unfortunately, little has been reported on Career Counseling for Blacks (e.g., Ford & Ford, 1978) and the challenge of finding a strategy for attainment of career satisfaction. A recent study by the present authors found that Black students professed a high regard for academic goals; however, interview data indicated that some Blacks felt rather complacent in initiating a job search strategy (Keller, Piotrowski, & Sherry 1982). Thus, these findings served as an impetus for the development of a career planning program for Black students.

Further, for Black students to translate their education into an effective career path there is currently a clear-cut educational dilemma. That is, academic degrees and professional training have traditionally been viewed as a guarantee of automatic employment, but this is not currently true for Black students seeking work. Finding meaningful and satisfying employment today is an arduous process, involving various approaches such as creating desirable impressions, knowing influential people, or merely being in the right place

at the right time. In such a competitive job market it is essential, then, that Black students not only prepare themselves academically for a desired career, but also that they plan a course of action, to enhance realistically their chances of achieving vocational and life goals.

In brief, the Black student may be confronted with a series of questions such as these: (1) Do I see the many career possibilities available to someone with my skills and experiences? (2) Do I perceive growth potential and advancement opportunity in my designated career? (3) How effective are my resume and job interviewing skills? (4) Do I perceive stereotyped attitudes toward Blacks in prospective employers?

Answering these questions will require getting honestly in touch with oneself, appraising personal skills, researching trends and attitudes in the market place, and consulting with qualified resource persons to set up realistic expectations. One means for condensing all these necessary activities has been called "Career and Life Planning," and offered under other similar titles.

Summary of the CLP Model

One such Career and Life Planning (CLP) course has been continually offered at The University of West Florida since 1971 and the model has been recently reported in the literature (Keller, Mayfield,& Piotrowski 1983). CLP has been offered as a workshop/course and has proven quite practical and effective in promoting personal growth, vocational planning, and preparation for one's career entry, particularly with Black students. Throughout CLP students frequently meet in small groups led by a trained facilitator. Outside the group, however, an individual can benefit from the CLP experience, by direct one-to-one consultation and counseling. Generally, however, CLP is a systematic group-process approach which follows a series of eight developmental steps. "Process" here is the key word because the concern is for a flexible, dynamic development of an employable person, following self-set guidelines that may change periodically. The CLP process steps are as follows:

Step 1: Self-Awareness: The individual gains self-knowledge through a series of self-awareness activities. Who am I? What are my personal characteristics, traits, and needs? How do other people see me? What are my assets and liabilities? Standardized personality tests are sometimes used to help answer these questions.

Step 2: Career Personality Profile: Using the self-knowledge gained from Step 1, the individual focuses on personal traits which are pertinent the world of work. These traits (e.g., preference for close contact with people; liking out-of-doors) are arranged in a hierarchical order to increase the possibility of job satisfaction.

Step 3: Settling on Four Careers: Four tentative career choices are made through information obtained from various career information courses such as: The Occupational Outlook Handbook and Dictionary of Occupational Titles, as well as "career brainstorming" exercises and feedback from small-group members. Standard vocational tests (like the Strong-Campbell) are frequently used as a resource in the selection of four careers.

Step 4: Projecting Four Careers Into the Future: The participants select two long-term life goals and predict how a particular career would affect such goals. Participants also imagine the direction the world may take in 10 or 20 years, especially as the world relates to potential career choices.

Step 5: Development of a Career Desires Profile: Each individual determines desired characteristics for jobs such as: income, benefits, job conditions, and opportunity for advancement. One specific career, based on future outlook, personal interviews with career persons and desired job characteristics is determined. These personal interviews clarify self-concept by allowing comparison with established career role models.

Step 6: Preparation of a Resume: Guidelines for preparing a resume are geared to the specific career. Sample resumes and cover letters are constructed, using the many resume writing sources available as models.

Step 7: Preparation for the Employment Interview: Participants practice the employment interview with a professional interviewer. If possible, this segment is video-taped and reviewed for feedback. Placement offices have samples of the most frequently asked questions during a job interview. These questions may be studied and possible responses practiced.

Step 8: Preparing for Subsequent Careers: Personal and career growth are considered crucial to continued job satisfaction. How can I advance in my career? How can I upgrade my current skills or develop new ones? What are my possible career alternatives?

Discussion

The eight-step CLP approach offered several unique features that respond to some of the issues and concerns of Black students. (1) There seems to be a misguided perception on the part of some Black students that a college education is a guarantee of satisfying employment (Keller et. al., 1982). In reality there are only a few high-demand fields that are actively pursuing college graduates through placement services. The majority of college students apply considerable energy in the job search. Furthermore, affirmative action policies and philosophies might instill a false sense of security in some Black students. Interview data in the Keller et. al. study indicated that some Black students were cognizant of the arduous and competitive nature of satisfying placement. (2) Previous research has indicated that while upper-level education prepares students academically for the world of work, very

little effort has been exerted in identifying the process by which Black students prepare themselves for the attainment of satisfactory employment. For example, although Black students may value high scholastic performance, rarely are they encouraged to investigate how their unique personalities, needs, and expectations will find a suitable and rewarding place in the world of work. By emphasizing "self-awareness" in the early stages of CLP the unique personality of each Black participant becomes evident. This process assists Black students in developing a realistic perception of their self-concept as it relates to job satisfaction. Suggestions for assisting Black student in developing a positive self-concept have been reported (Bradley & Stewart, 1982).

In addition, Black students need to stress resume and job interview skills as these are critical aspects of a successful job search and effective placement. These CLP skills are crucial to the Black student, especially in light of possibly facing discrimination in employment interviews (Jablin & Tengler, 1982; McConahay, 1983).

The CLP Program described here is, in essence, a condensed format of the original model described earlier (Keller, et al., 1983). However, the needs and concerns of Black students alluded to are emphasized. Each year in honor of "Black History Month" the authors offer the condensed format as a workshop to interested Black students. It was felt that issues such as discrimination in the job interview and career satisfaction in the corporate world could be more candidly expressed than in a racially mixed class environment (e.g., Shipp, 1983). Finally, Black students are encouraged to become familiar with career information that responds to their unique needs (i.e., The Black Collegian Magazine).

Conclusion

Despite the many concerns Black students may experience about their career choices, systematic planning definitely helps them both in determining and in achieving personal career goals. As stated by Ford & Ford (1978):

> Counselors should emphasize to Black clients the necessity of planning a long-range employment strategy that will lift them out of the lower economic rungs of lateral career movement into the higher and more economically satisfying positions to which their white peers have traditionally had access (p. 62).

The CLP model offers a proven effective means to that end. This is based on evaluation of the course by past participants who stressed the usefulness of the job-interviewing, resume preparation, and self-knowledge exercises (Keller et. al., 1983). Furthermore, CLP offers an opportunity to view long-range projections for employment in many popular fields, often discovering that the job market may be experiencing a glut of college-trained job seekers at the time the Black expects to enter it. Thus, much frustration could be avoided by such research into various career fields. On the other hand, there is the Black student who is merely attending college as a goal in itself. Such a student benefits from a CLP approach by discovering something to strive for, by actually defining a specific purpose for which to eventually use his/her college education.

Finally, the CLP experience in obtaining vital information about one's career field and presenting oneself effectively in the job interview fosters both Competence and Confidence; two widely recognized ingredients of career placement success. This enhanced attitude of assertiveness on the part of Black students will expand career opportunities.

References

Bachhuber, T. Career development in higher education: Process, program or problem? Journal of Employment Counseling, 1977, 14, 31-38.

Bradley, L.R., & Stewart, M.A. The relationship between self-concept and personality development in Black college students: A developmental approach. Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance, 1982, 10, 114-125.

Evans, J., & Rector, A. Evaluation of a college course in career decision making. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1978, 19, 163-168.

Ford, C., & Ford, D. J. Is career counseling for black people? Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance, 1978, 6, 53-62.

Haney, T., & Howland, P. Career course for credit: Necessity or luxury? Journal of College Placement, 1978, 39, 75-77.

Jablin, F. M., & Tengler, C. D. Facing discrimination in on-campus interviews. Journal of College Placement, 1982, 42, 57-61.

Keller, J. W., Mayfield, M., & Piotrowski, C. Career and life planning: A process approach. Canadian Vocational Journal, 1983, 19, 12-13.

Keller, J. W., Piotrowski, C., & Sherry, D. Perceptions of the college environment and campus life: The black experience. Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance, 1982, 10, 126-132.

McConahay, J. B. Modern racism and modern discrimination: The effects of race, racial attitudes, and context on simulated hiring decisions. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 1983, 9, 551-558.

Rubinton, A. Instruction in career decision and decision making styles. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1980, 27, 581-588.

Shipp, P. L. Counseling blacks: A group approach. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1983, 62, 108-111.

Ware, M., & Matthews, J. Stimulating career exploration and research among undergraduates: A colloquium series. Teaching of Psychology, 1980, 7, 36-38.

Weissman, S. & Krebs, D. A decision making model for career exploration. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1976, 54, 517-518.

Footnotes

Chris Piotrowski, M.A., is a Faculty Associate and Researcher at The University of West Florida and is also Co-founder of the Last Call, Inc. John W. Keller, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of the Career and Life Planning Program at The University of West Florida.